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The Role of the USDA in a Total Extension Program* AUG 17 1965

CURRENT SERIAL REVIEW

The subject on which I have been asked to talk is an interesting one.

First it involves the question of "What do we mean by 'a Total Extension Program'?"

In my discussion I would limit this to informal, problem solving, educational programs, or work designed to help people solve problems, develop opportunities -- largely using educational techniques.

In other words, I am not including programs that consist of:

- An extension of university in its academic orientation, or formal off campus course work.

This title also seems to presume a total extension program broader in scope than the interests and responsibilities of the USDA.

Such a program might include parts:

- Financing through other Federal Departments, or
- Financed by State and local Government.

In fact there are such programs now.

Some are known as Extension, some known by other names.

For example the SBA provides assistance to business that is essentially "extension" in terms of my definition.

The REA provides management assistance to borrowers that is educational, problem solving in nature.

The HHFA supports State and Regional planning activities that includes educational activity similar in some respects to Extension's work in area development.

There are numerous State efforts -- for example in N. Y. State an Extension program for labor leaders conducted through the Cornell school of ILLR.

If we look carefully I think we will find many agencies conducting work similar to Extension in terms of the criteria I mentioned.

*Speech by Lloyd H. Davis, Administrator, FES, USDA at Eighth National Cooperative Extension Administrative Seminar, University of Wisconsin, May 4, 1965.

One could read into this subject the assumption that current legislation will pass and be funded.

I am not at all sure this will happen at this session of Congress but the odds seem good.

Sooner or later the unserved needs for Extension programs will be met. I see no reason why the State Cooperative Extension Services could not or should not accept funds from several Departments of the Federal Government to conduct work in the areas of responsibility of those Departments.

Within this framework I would like to review the Responsibility of USDA in Extension Programs. First I would observe that there is nothing static about USDA responsibilities.

We have seen a gradual evolution over time in the total responsibilities and role of the USDA.

At one time I am told the USDA was a relaxed scientific agency. Over time it has developed a number of action programs to deal directly with problems and needs of agriculture.

During recent years the scope of these activities has broadened. Just consider some shifts during the last four years -- an increasing concern for the total rural community for the conservation, development and use of natural resources, and other shifts.

We might, under this title, consider the relation of Extension type education to action programs of Department. I would propose that the Department has a responsibility to inform people of these programs and their opportunities to make use of services provided. It would be interesting to review in some detail the Action agencies' responsibility for this vs. Extension's. I don't expect to dwell on this except to say that each agency does have an informational and educational role in relation to its programs -- doubt Extension's desire to do it all or wisdom of trying.

To fully discuss this subject we should consider the role of FES staff in relation to States. I expect to discuss this with you at regional meetings soon.

Probably the most obvious questions implied in this title are -- What national goals are likely to be served by Extension programs financed and administered through the USDA? For what goals -- what problems -- what clientele does the USDA have a responsibility to the Congress -- as it seeks, obtains, and allocates funds to the State for Extension work?

We could turn this coin over and ask "What responsibilities do the States have to USDA that go with the Federal funds made available through the USDA?" We all recognize that this is the Cooperative Extension Service. We have responsibilities in three directions that go with funds from these sources.

All county agents are keenly aware of their responsibilities to the county appropriating body. And similarly Directors feel strongly their responsibilities to the State legislature and the U. S. Congress.

These are two sides of same coin. We can't discuss one without the other.

One might start with the Smith-Lever Act--our basic authorization. Of course more specific responsibilities within this authorization are provided as funds for implementing our work are provided.

It is always useful to go to the legislative history of any Act to determine the intent of Congress. The report of the House Agriculture Committee in reporting the Smith-Lever Act to the House is most useful in this regard. Mr. Lever, chairman of that committee, reporting on the committee action said of the county agent:

"Who in the very nature of things must give leadership and direction along all lines of rural activity--social, economic, and financial."

"... The committee does not believe that Congress can afford to appropriate money for the sole purpose of teaching the farmer the best methods of increasing production.... The itinerant teacher will be expected to give as much thought to the economic side of agriculture . . . as he gives to . . . larger acreage yields. He is to assume leadership in every movement, whatever it may be, the aim of which is better farming, better living, more happiness, more education, better citizenship."

Mr. Lever's whole report deserves re-reading once in a while by all of us.

Our Memorandum of Understanding also spells out our Cooperative responsibilities. I would like to quote two parts:

"The land-grant institution agrees:

"To accept the responsibility for conducting all educational work in the fields of agriculture and home economics and subjects related thereto as authorized by the Smith-Lever Act as amended and other Acts supporting Cooperative Extension work, and such

phases of other programs of the Department as are primarily educational, which the Department has been authorized to carry on within the State.

"The United States Department of Agriculture agrees:

"To conduct through . . . (Land-Grant Institution) . . . all extension work in agriculture and home economics and subjects relating thereto authorized by Congress to be carried on within the State except those activities which by mutual agreement it is determined can most appropriately and effectively be carried out directly by the Department."

Within the USDA certain functions are delegated to FES. This delegation too helps to define responsibilities. This delegation says:

"The following assignment of functions is hereby made to the Federal Extension Service:

- "a. The administration of the Smith-Lever Act as amended (7 U. S. C. 341-349).
- "b. Educational and demonstration work in cooperative farm forestry conducted under Section 5 of the Act of June 7, 1924, as amended by the Act of October 26, 1949 (16 U. S. C. 568).
- "c. Educational and demonstration work of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U. S. C. 1621-1627).
- "d. Educational leadership for the Department's farm safety educational program.
- "e. Providing a focal point of contact and working relationships with national town-country church leaders and denominational and inter-denominational church organizations. This work is carried on in cooperation with other agencies of the Department and with the State Extension Services and other national, State and local organizations.
- "f. Coordination of all educational activities of the Department including examination and analysis of all such activities current and contemplated, review and approval of all educational activities or proposals prior to initiation, advice and consultation on planning with heads of agencies, and reports and recommendations to the Secretary.
- "g. Rendering educational and technical assistance to persons not receiving financial assistance under Title 5 of the Housing Act of 1949, including Extension demonstrations.

- "h. Provide leadership and direct assistance to State Extension Service in planning, conducting, and evaluating Extension programs with Indians under a memorandum of agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs dated May, 1956, pursuant to the authority provided in Section 601 of the Act of June 30, 1932, as amended (31 U.S.C. 686).
- "i. Responsible for information and educational services, essential to carrying out pre-emergency and emergency USDA defense operations through the State Extension Services.
- "j. Provide in rural redevelopment areas organizational and educational leadership for orderly development of local economics initiative. (Area Redevelopment Act (PL 87-27)).
- "k. Cooperate with Land-Grant Colleges in furthering conservation and resource development education. State and County Extension organizations will, in turn, make appropriate arrangements for assistance to soil and water conservation districts.
- "l. Act as the liaison between the Department and officials of the Land-Grant Colleges and Universities on all matters relating to Cooperative Extension work and educational activities relating thereto."

Another way to approach this question is to assume that the USDA responsibility in education encompasses a scope of clientele and problems comparable to its action responsibilities and infer from the total USDA role its educational role.

How broad then is the Department's responsibility? Secretary Freeman made an important talk March 22, 1965 at Little Rock, Arkansas.

In that talk he discussed the role of the USDA. First he quoted President Johnson as follows:

President Johnson has said: The job can and will be done,

- We will build an America that is strong and beautiful;
- We will build a nation of people who are healthy, well-educated and well-housed.
- We will build a society of boundless and expanding opportunity where every person, Negro and white, can develop and employ his energy, his talent and his enterprise to the extent of his ability,

-- We will eliminate poverty.
 "We shall settle for nothing less."

Secretary Freeman went on to say:

"But full and complete development of our society and the elimination of poverty is a project of many dimensions -- most of them inseparably related to each other. For instance:

"It is not enough to eliminate the immediate outward signs of poverty and do nothing about what really causes poverty.

"It is not enough to build highways and roads that lead only to abandoned towns and withered communities.

"It is not enough to promote and attract industry and not have the young people educated and trained to take the highly skilled jobs which modern industry requires.

"It is not enough to attack the complex and burdensome problems of cities and leave the problems of farm families and rural people unnoticed and untended.

"It is this latter point -- the development of our rural areas, the strengthening of our farm family agriculture, the improvement of our rural communities, the full development of economic and social opportunities..."

"I saw as Secretary that when people talked about the farm problem, we had to analyze that problem in terms of people, not commodities. I saw that where the Department had been primarily concerned with farm people and farming as an industry, it now must become equally concerned with all rural people -- farmers and nonfarmers alike. We had to be concerned with the rural community as a whole. Indeed, only by so broadening our concern we serve the farmer himself.

"We were faced, whether we fully understood the challenge, with a transformation in the whole of rural America. It would, and is, transforming the Department of Agriculture. We are broadening our concern from agriculture as an industry to rural America as an element of our national society. Regardless of the name which eventually will adorn the Department, rural affairs has become a part of the working title.

"This does not mean the effort and activities which the Department carries on for the farmer have been downgraded -- far from it. We simply recognize that programs for agriculture as an industry are not enough by themselves to serve adequately the needs of the non-farm rural economy, and the time has come to raise the status of the program for

rural people on the same level as the programs for commercial agriculture. Either the rural economy must offer a broader range of income and job opportunities, or the rural community will continue its decline."

There are other recent sources further identifying Extension's responsibilities. Here are a few:

Secretary's Memorandum 1448, July 23, 1963 (Revised, Supplement 1 --)

"Provide in rural development areas organizational and educational leadership for orderly development of local economic initiative."

October 8, 1963 -- Chairman's Instruction No. 63-18 --

"Responsibilities of the Federal Extension Service for Educational Activities in Support of Income-Producing Recreational Development."

"In keeping with the overall responsibility of the Federal Extension Service for leadership in the educational activities of the Department of Agriculture as stated in Title I of the Administrative Regulations, this agency in cooperation with the State Extension Service will be responsible for the following types of educational activity in support of the expansion and development of income-producing recreational enterprises on privately owned and other non-Federal lands"

Secretary's Memorandum 1573 -- "Policy Statement on Natural Beauty of the Countryside" --

"The Federal Extension Service, in cooperation with other Department agencies and the Cooperative State Extension Service, will provide leadership in developing and initiating educational programs directed at appreciation and enhancement of natural beauty. The Extension Service will seek the active cooperation of national, State and local organizations and groups in advancing this objective."

In the 1965 Supplemental Appropriation request the President said funds requested for use by Extension in Appalachia would be used to:

"Provide advice and assistance designed to improve the community and to develop its economy."

In his Message relative to Farm Program in January, 1965 -- the President said:

"I have requested funds in the 1966 budget to . . . strengthen the capacity of the Cooperative Federal-State Extension Service to assist rural communities in forming strong and active development organizations."

One of the most recent documents helping to define the USDA Responsibility in Extension is a letter from Secretary Freeman to Presidents of Land-Grant Universities in which he said"

"The Department of Agriculture has always been concerned with the welfare of farm and rural people, their communities, and their economy. We have recently studied the impact in rural areas of programs of the Federal government provided to help people develop their community and its economy and to serve their individual needs.

"Briefly, many programs intended for all areas are applied more quickly and more completely by people in metropolitan areas. The application in many rural areas is very slow. This may result in greater disadvantage for people in those lagging areas.

"President Johnson has expressed serious concern for this problem. He has asked this Department to use its facilities in rural areas to help people there more fully use services provided by other departments of government.

"As we see it, this objective can only be accomplished as people in these non-metropolitan areas understand their problems, the opportunities they have for improving their welfare, their community, and their economy, and as they work individually and through development organizations to realize these opportunities. This process of acquiring understanding and developing organization will include learning about aids available through the State and Federal government and appropriate use of these aids.

"This is an educational process in which our Cooperative Extension Service has had long experience. To carry out our responsibilities to the people of these areas will require comprehensive educational programs related to a wide range of community services, opportunities for economic development, uses of natural resources, and developmental needs of people."

"I am hopeful that a responsibility for educational and organizational leadership in this broad field in non-metropolitan areas will be in harmony with your expectations of the Cooperative Extension Service in your State so that these areas will not lag in economic growth, civic improvement, and the development of their people."

I would like to cite one last quote. In June of 1963 Austin Vines presented a paper at our Colorado conference in which he discussed the role of Cooperative Extension. He cited three alternatives. They were:

- "1. Provide informal educational leadership for subjects of agriculture, home economics, forestry and subjects related on a broad base in both rural and urban areas without responsibility for community or total resource development.
- "2. Provide informal educational leadership for subjects of agriculture, home economics, forestry and subjects related on a broad base in both rural and urban areas. In addition provide educational leadership for community and total resource development to rural areas. This would require that the resources of the total university, where these resources can contribute to community and resource development, be involved in rural areas and as they are applied through informal methods for problem solving.
- "3. Broaden extension's educational leadership to include all informal educational programs in both rural and urban areas and extend educational programs from all colleges of the university or state system. This would involve leadership in the organization and development of problem-solving processes in connection with community and total resource development. It would require the involvement of the resources of the total university as they would be applied through informal methods to all segments of society."

It seems to me that we are in most places well beyond alternative #1 in our programs. Alternative # 2 comes rather close to the role expressed by the House Agriculture Committee in 1914 and by Secretary Freeman in 1965.

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Federal Extension Service
U. S. Department of Agriculture

Background of Work of Special Farm Policy Task Force *

The program for the next two hours is provided for discussion of some work now in progress in which you certainly will have a direct interest. It is an effort initiated by the FES to help the States conduct educational work in connection with national policies concerned with the excess productive capacity in agriculture and the prices of farm products.

While the FES has organized the effort, it involves workers in a number of States. It is, indeed, a cooperative effort between FES and the States to facilitate work in this field.

We are interested in informing you at this stage, as the work is nicely underway, and receiving your suggestions. Also, we are working with the Directors to keep them informed.

My role in this program is to provide some of the background for the initiation of this work. Others will present additional information. Let me very briefly present a number of factors in the background.

First, Extension has accepted responsibility for educational work in public affairs affecting agriculture. We could cite many documents expressing this acceptance of responsibility. Let me briefly quote just one source, a talk by Administrator York to this meeting a year ago:

"Extension was created to provide an educational program aimed at dealing with some of the most pressing economic and social problems of rural people... Public policy decisions are deeply involved in all of those problems. The guidelines to our Scope Report which many of you helped prepare, state clearly: 'There can be no question of Extension's responsibility in public affairs. The legal mandate is implicit--reinforced by insistent demands of people for help in understanding public problems.'"

Second, I think we all recognize national decisions dealing with our problems of excess productive capacity and price as among the more important public affairs matters affecting agriculture. If we are to be truly concerned with problems of farmers and public decisions affecting them, educational work dealing with this problem seems to deserve high priority.

*Talk by Dr. Lloyd H. Davis, Deputy Administrator, Federal Extension Service, USDA, at the National Agricultural Policy Conference, Gull Lake, Michigan, September 14, 1962.

Third, we in FES recognize the very considerable amount of work that you and other members of the staff in your State have done on this subject. As an organization, we indeed have made considerable progress. Also, I want to give public recognition of the very strong support provided by the Farm Foundation in helping to make this progress. However, we are very frequently impressed by the very considerable lack of understanding of the problem, the policy alternatives, and the consequences, and the very great need for increased understanding. In this connection, I would add that it is most important that farm people have this understanding, but increasingly the attitudes of urban groups are going to be felt as the decisions are made. It is of growing importance that the non-farm and urban groups have this understanding.

Fourth, we recognize that a farm bill is now being passed but this does not settle the issues. The issues will be before the next Congress, and the next. There is and will continue to be a need for sustained emphasis on educational work on this problem. However, the strong concern over government costs, the severity of the problems, and the great lack of understanding seem to indicate the desirability of some increased emphasis in the future months and years. The period ahead is likely to be one of critical decision.

In light of these considerations the FES decided to take the initiative in working with the States to pool some experience and knowledge, to help all States do an effective educational job in this field. The procedure that is being followed recognizes the very great experience many of you have had in doing educational work on this problem, and the invaluable contribution that can be made to other educators by those who have been on the firing line dealing successfully with these issues. We wish we might have involved more of you in the work done to date, but the work was initiated when many of you were on foreign tours and otherwise committed, and it was decided to keep the task force small to facilitate accomplishment. All of you will have your turn.

Next, let me comment briefly on the Extension Service's role in this field--this provides part of the framework in which the work is being done.

As we see it, our role is strictly one of education--to provide people with reliable information about the problem, provide a framework of principles within which to analyze this information, provide a knowledge of the policy alternatives and a basis for evaluating these--to encourage and motivate them to study and analyze the problem and the alternatives, and reach their own conclusions--to do this within the framework of their own value systems and goals--and to encourage them to participate in the decision making process on the basis of their evaluations. Our role is to be strictly objective, helping people understand all facets of the problem and the alternatives.

And let me be perfectly clear on one thing--the FES is under no pressure whatever to be anything but absolutely objective.

In initiating the effort that is underway we in the Administrator's office had three objectives:

First, and foremost, to help the States do a job of education that would result in a widespread improvement in understanding of the problem and the policy alternatives. This objective over-shadows the others. But, frankly, we also wanted to demonstrate that the Extension Service is a dynamic organization, aware of the problems of agriculture, and willing to carry out its responsibilities. And the third minor objective--to strongly demonstrate that the Cooperative Extension Service, including FES, is in a position to do a completely objective job on an important controversial public issue.

I think we all recognize that this is not a safe and secure area of work--I don't need to tell this to a group that is on the firing line.

I have said before--and I still think it is true--that the greatest danger is that workers conducting work in this field may fail to recognize their own values and fail to avoid a coloring of their work by their own judgments based on their own values.

The procedures being followed in this effort are designed to minimize this danger in the preparation of materials.

Others on the program will give you more details on the work being done and the plans. But first, I'll give you a general run down.

Last summer after the defeat of the first 1962 Farm Bill, our staff recommended that we initiate the development of materials to help the States do a basic job of education on this problem with farm and non-farm people--recognizing the very great lack of understanding and the very great interest in and importance of the issues.

We brought together a small task force of policy specialists to consider the idea, after discussing the idea with their Directors. This group concurred that the job should be done. This group then undertook to prepare a series of resource papers as a basis for such educational work. The first draft of these papers will be provided and distributed today. The Policy Committee plans to appoint a committee of outstanding authorities who will review these papers. They will be concerned with checking whether the best available data are used, the economics are sound, and any biases are showing. After this review and discussion with you, the plan is to further polish these papers.

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Another coordinated task force of program leaders and information specialists is developing a program guide that is laying out alternative program activities for agents and suggesting procedure to accompany these alternatives.

As this work progresses another group plans to try their hand at preparing suggested training aids and materials for use on mass media.

Throughout this process it is recognized that materials and program suggestions will probably require considerable adaptation, localization, and supplementation in individual States. But it is hoped that the materials will make it easier for a State with limited staff resources (and what State isn't limited) to do a job.

Another point I want to stress is this. Everyone concerned with this work recognizes that each State has program responsibility, each has its own plans and commitments, each has special needs and problems. As an ex-Extension Director I am especially cognizant of this. Therefore, the materials are made available for consideration in each State--without any pressure to make use of them at any time. However, we hope people in each State will recognize the special needs of the day and the careful work that has gone into the preparation of the materials, and then give careful consideration to possible use of the material in their program.

In closing let me say this is a new type of cooperative effort--an experiment of sorts--we look forward to evaluating the results. Personally, I want to express for the organization very great appreciation to the task forces who are working on this job, and a great respect for the tremendous knowledge and ability they have displayed. With such workers Extension has a brilliant future in this field.

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